

JUL 1 1964

STATINTL

MAX FREEDMAN

3 Senators Agree on Viet Nam

Fulbright, Humphrey, Church Believe U. N. Should Defer Any Intervention

In the Senate the other day Senator Church started a debate that soon spread to a discussion of the United Nations and the war in Viet Nam. He did not intend to provoke such a discussion; he really wanted to speak up in support of the United Nations and to protect it from attack by people like Senator Goldwater. But the mere mention of Viet Nam was enough to stir a lively debate.

The first point to be noted about this discussion was that only Democrats took part in it. Senator Goldwater has tried to break the Republican Party into organized opposition to the way the Johnson administration has been behaving in Viet Nam; but thus far his success has been negligible. The Republicans cannot shake out of their minds the warning by Ambassador Lodge that America's involvement in Viet Nam dates back to the Eisenhower administration and since then has been supported by both parties. It is utterly unconvincing for Senator Goldwater to pretend now that he or any other Republican has a solution which is being willfully ignored by the folly of Washington.

As the debate showed, most Senators are not concerned with the morbid review of wrong turnings and past mistakes. They are more eager to prevent a bigger and more ruthless war, and nowhere is this anxiety stronger than in the Democratic Party.

That was the theme com-

mon to Senators Church, Fulbright, Humphrey, Pell, Proxmire and Morse. An exception, however, must be made of Senator Morse. He has advanced the grave charge that the American program in Viet Nam "violates one international commitment after another." He commands no support for this view which is a libel on America advertised with all the authority that belongs to a senior Senator. Regardless of what else may have gone wrong, it is perverse and mischievous to regard the United States as the bandit nation in Viet Nam. Senator Morse should drop this argument before it sinks him incurably in the respect of the American people.

It is more useful to concentrate on Senator Fulbright and Senator Humphrey. In Senator Fulbright's judgment, the essential task now is to stabilize the military situation as the prelude to any political initiatives that may yet be taken. At present he sees no great role for the United Nations in putting an end to the struggle. But he does not exclude a possibility later. "If conditions should arise," Senator Fulbright told the Senate, "in which it would be feasible for the United Nations to take over and maintain order, I would be in favor of that." Senator Humphrey, trying to put at rest all fears of a larger war, said "I do not favor accelerating the war. I believe I can say this Government does

not." He agreed with Senator Fulbright that one day the influence of the United Nations might well be both timely and constructive.

Quite plainly Senator Church had impressed his colleagues by his warning against any new policy that would commit the United States to military attacks on Viet Nam and military decisions that might also provoke a clash with China. No one dissented from his warning that we must ponder our next steps very carefully "if we are to avoid a tragic trail of casualties in Asia out of all proportion to the vital interests of the United States."

Some weeks ago great interest was taken in the announcement that Harlan Cleveland, who is in charge of United Nations affairs for the State Department, would attend the Honolulu Conference to review the problems of Viet Nam and Southeast Asia. It was generally felt that his presence in Honolulu would focus attention on what the United Nations could do to end the danger of a spreading war.

As it turned out Mr. Cleveland was unable to leave Washington because sudden anxieties over Cyprus kept him here. But that does not mean that he and his officials are avoiding the close and continuous study of what the United Nations can do, at the right time, to promote stability and peace in this whole restless area.

© 1964